

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SSB 5610

As Passed House - Amended:

April 14, 2005

Title: An act relating to salmon recovery and watershed health.

Brief Description: Promoting salmon recovery on a regionwide basis.

Sponsors: By Senate Committee on Natural Resources, Ocean & Recreation (originally sponsored by Senator Jacobsen).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Natural Resources, Ecology & Parks: 3/22/05, 4/1/05 [DPA];

Appropriations: 4/2/05 [DPA(APP w/o NREP)s].

Floor Activity:

Passed House - Amended: 4/14/05, 80-14.

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill (As Amended by House)

- Extends the Governor's Salmon Recovery Office (GSRO) from June 30, 2006, until June 30, 2007.
- Establishes definitions for salmon recovery regions and regional recovery organizations.
- Authorizes lead entities within a salmon recovery region to form a regional salmon recovery organization to plan, coordinate and monitor a regional plan.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES, ECOLOGY & PARKS

Majority Report: Do pass as amended. Signed by 10 members: Representatives B. Sullivan, Chair; Upthegrove, Vice Chair; Buck, Ranking Minority Member; Blake, DeBolt, Dickerson, Eickmeyer, Hunt, Orcutt and Williams.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 1 member: Representative Kretz, Assistant Ranking Minority Member.

Staff: Jeff Olsen (786-7157).

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Majority Report: Do pass as amended by Committee on Appropriations and without amendment by Committee on Natural Resources, Ecology & Parks. Signed by 28 members: Representatives Sommers, Chair; Fromhold, Vice Chair; Alexander, Ranking Minority Member; Anderson, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; McDonald, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Bailey, Buri, Clements, Cody, Conway, Darneille, Dunshee, Grant, Haigh, Hinkle, Hunter, Kagi, Kenney, Kessler, Linville, McDermott, McIntire, Miloscia, Pearson, Priest, Schual-Berke, Talcott and Walsh.

Staff: Charlie Gavigan (786-7340).

Background:

Salmon Recovery Planning (ESHB 2496, Chapter 246, Laws of 1998)

The Salmon Recovery Act of 1998 established several new provisions including the creation of the Governor's Salmon Recovery Office, the requirement for a biennial State of the Salmon Report, an Independent Science Panel, the creation of local salmon recovery groups or "lead entities," and an Interagency Review Team to disperse funds for habitat restoration projects. Currently, there are 27 lead entities organizations in Washington.

The Salmon Recovery Act established technical advisory groups at the Conservation Commission to identify the limiting factors for salmon.

Salmon Recovery Funding (2ESSB 5595, Chapter 13, Laws of 1999, 1st Spec. Sess.)

The Salmon Recovery Funding Act of 1999 primarily established the Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB) within the Interagency Office for Outdoor Recreation (IAC), but also included several other salmon recovery provisions. The SRFB makes grants for salmon habitat projects and salmon recovery activities pursuant to legislative appropriation. The IAC provides grant and loan administration assistance to the SRFB. The SRFB must develop procedures and criteria for allocating funds on a statewide basis to address the highest priorities for salmon habitat protection and restoration.

Regional Salmon Recovery Organizations

Five regional organizations have formed to address salmon recovery on an Evolutionarily Significant Unit (ESU) scale. Two regional recovery organizations have been created statutorily, the Lower Columbia Fish Recovery Board, and the Snake River Salmon Recovery Board. The other three regional entities include the Puget Sound Shared Strategy, the Yakima Sub-basin Fish and Wildlife Planning Board, and the Upper Columbia Salmon Recovery Board. Regional recovery groups are in the process of completing regional salmon recovery plans. When completed, the plans will contain strategies to address habitat, harvest, hatchery, and hydropower activities for recovering salmon populations within the region.

Governor's Forum on Monitoring Salmon Recovery and Watershed Health

On July 12, 2004, the Governor issued an Executive Order creating the Governor's Forum on Monitoring Salmon Recovery and Watershed Health. The Forum must make recommendations on biennial reporting of monitoring results and progress in watershed health and salmon recovery. The Forum must also develop a broad set of measures that will convey results and progress on salmon recovery and watershed health in ways that are easily understood by the public, legislators, and Congress.

Summary of Amended Bill:

Legislative intent is established to develop and implement salmon recovery activities through strong watershed-based local and regional recovery plans. Regional salmon recovery organizations are defined as entities formed for the purpose of recovering salmon. Salmon recovery regions are defined as geographic areas that encompass watersheds with common stocks of salmon that are generally consistent with the areas identified by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration or the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

The GSRO is extended from June 30, 2006, until June 30, 2010. The duties of GSRO are expanded to include assisting regional recovery organizations in submitting plans to the federal fish services for adoption as federal recovery plans. In addition, the GSRO may assist state agencies and others in obtaining federal assurances under the Endangered Species Act.

The Governor's salmon report is continued through December 1, 2006, and additional considerations are added including recommendations for funding for recovery activities. The report must also summarize monitoring data coordinated by the monitoring forum.

Definitions are established for salmon recovery regions and regional recovery organizations. Lead entities within a salmon recovery region may form a regional salmon recovery organization to plan, coordinate, and monitor implementation of a regional recovery plan. The GSRO may recognize new regional salmon recovery organizations.

The Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB) may provide block grants to lead entities or regional recovery organizations to implement salmon recovery activities. Entities receiving block grants must provide an annual report to the SRFB summarizing how funds were expended.

The Monitoring Oversight Committee established in 2001, technical advisory groups created under the Conservation Commission to conduct limiting factors analysis, and requirements for the Independent Science Panel to provide recommendations on monitoring are repealed.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date of Amended Bill: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: (Natural Resources, Ecology & Parks) (In support) The bill continues state support for salmon recovery, with a focus on implementing plans on the ground. Important

reporting functions continue and the bill includes a mechanism to recognize regional organizations. Important functions of the Governor's Salmon Recovery Office will continue, and so will the work of the monitoring forum. The bill clarifies roles and responsibilities and provides balance.

(With concerns) There is some concern that the Governor has the discretion to recognize regional recovery organization, but may choose not to recognize some regional groups.

Testimony For: (Appropriations) None.

Testimony Against: (Natural Resources, Ecology & Parks) None.

Testimony Against: (Appropriations) None.

Persons Testifying: (Natural Resources, Ecology & Parks) (In support) Jeff Breckel, Lower Columbia Fish Recovery Board; Jim Kramer, Shared Strategy for Puget Sound; Doug Osterman, Lead Entity Advisory Group; Jim Fox, Interagency Committee on Outdoor Recreation and Salmon Recovery Funding Board; Bob Nichols, Governor's Salmon Recovery Office; and Tim Smith, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife.

(With concerns) Debby Hyde, Pierce County Special Projects; and John Stuhlmiller, Farm Bureau.

Persons Testifying: (Appropriations) None.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: (Natural Resources, Ecology & Parks) None.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: (Appropriations) None.